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LAFAYETTE IN AMERICA AND FRANCE.

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Plutarch, in his estimate of the character of Sylla, recites as his chief glory the merit of having preferred the public good to his own. In our day, contemplating the career of the Roman hero, his craft, ambition and vindictiveness, it is difficult to allow the historian's praise justly bestowed. Perhaps to Washington, alone among statesmen, it can be conscientiously awarded, and after Washington to Lafayette. Yet we submit that a close analysis of the character of the two men most prominently identified with the American Revolution would reveal an impassible gulf—a mighty chasm between the French hero and the American patriot. Removed from the close of Lafayette's career by now nearly three-fourths of a century, it remains true that a correct understanding of his motives is yet impossible. Our civilization is too deeply material to understand a hero. It scarcely understands its patriots, and Lafayette, despite his numerous shortcomings, properly belongs to the rank of heroes. A patriot seeks only to bring freedom to his own country. Lafayette sought to free the world. In this respect his career was an anomaly. He has been called "the Apostle of Liberty," and the phrase is an apt one. He, it seems, considered himself set apart to free the universe. Only accident prevented him from attempting the emancipation of Ireland. In the English Parliament he was called "an inspired

madman," and kings regarded him as a dangerous enemy. Throughout his life he declared himself a hater of crowns, and wherever he moved crowned heads looked upon him as a dangerous guest. The very universality of his patriotism makes his character difficult to understand. He himself affords us the best analysis of it that has been given. In a speech delivered from the French tribune January 28, 1831, in partially reviewing his career, he uttered these significant words, "I saw in the world but two classes—the oppressor and the oppressed. I will now say that two principles divide Europe—the sovereign right of the people and the right divine of kings. On the one hand liberty and equality; on the other despotism and privilege." Against these he warred, and his battle was almost universal. It is difficult, if not quite impossible, to find his parallel in history, or even in the pages of romance. The Greek heroes, for the most part shadowy phantoms, wrapped about with myth and traditions, labored only for Greece. Joan d'Ark, Sobieski, Washington—these were patriots merely, while this man was a world-patriot. Under other circumstances, we cannot help imagining, he would have been a great poet, or, if we may be forgiven the thought, a great saint. He might have been a Saint Francis of Assissi, hoping, praying, suffering, struggling against the world to make the world better. He was not a